

Volunteer Vision

~~~~~ The e-newsletter for volunteers in the South Hams ~~~~~

## The party's on - thanks to Andy, Robin and Ruth



**Talk about luck!** Just days before a Home-Along party for 100 people, both volunteer cooks had to pull out. One was ill, the other got called to work.

Enter Andy Major and family. Andy, who teaches in Kingsbridge rang the volunteer centre offering to do 'something useful' on Christmas day.

There seemed to be few opportunities, but CVS admin officer Kristine had spotted posters for the big annual party at Brixham's Catholic Church hall, and thought they just might need help. "You bet we do" breathed an amazed and relieved organiser, Linda Garwood.

So 9am saw Andy with Robin and mum Ruth (above) in a tiny kitchen -100 yards along the road from the hall - cooking up a feast with all the trimmings. "It was good fun" said Andy.

"They were absolutely wonderful" said Linda. So say all of us.

### Welcome to the 2nd Volunteer Vision!

The first *Volunteer Vision* launched last summer.

As 2008 dawned, the count of individuals we've advised, signposted, placed or encouraged reached 140.

More than one third said they had not volunteered before.

Central to a good service is unearthing *opportunities*: 150 so far - and we are sure there are many more hidden away across South Hams.

There are particular gaps we want to fill with keen volunteers: step forward arts, science and sport!

Whether you are a volunteer or a group organiser or quite possibly both, do give us a call.

**South Hams  
Volunteer  
Centre**

**01803 862 266**

More contact  
information  
on back page.



# South Hams Volunteer Centre

# What you do is big time - report

Volunteers shine out from an official report as a mainstay of life in Britain. In September the Cabinet Office released new figures that show more than half the adult population volunteer 'formally' each year.

Volunteering isn't about money of course - but researchers totted up the hours and reckoned the economic value of all your effort as being near **£40 billion**. That's nudging half the entire budget of the NHS. And it doesn't include one-off acts of help and kindness.

On average, says the report commissioned from the Institute for Volunteering Research, volunteers gave 11 hours over four weeks. Their most common motive was to improve things or help people.

In a follow-up move, leading voluntary organisations are lobbying MPs for a new Community Day bank holiday.

• *Figures from the national survey of volunteering and charitable giving. Cabinet Office, Sept 2007*

## *Ning, Twitter, Seesmic... the future is now*

Apart from conversation, long may it last, how do you communicate? Faxes, letters? That's yesterday. Email? Not if you're young: it's thumbs to the mobile and wi-fi the web.

This e-revolution in how we reach out to one another got going



in UK with Friends Reunited.

Now the scene is abuzz with online social media: Facebook, Ning (screenshot, left) Twitter, Seesmic, and d-i-y television such as You Tube.

Highly developed in America, these virtual organisations and communities of

interest are spluttering into life in UK. Some larger voluntary action groups here use podcasts and videos to contact new audiences with what they do.

Our parent CVS is keenly committed to developing electronic media and so are we, as a volunteer centre concerned to engage with young and isolated people. If you have interest or expertise in this area, please let's hear from you. Telephone?

### SIXTH COLUMN

## The great paperchase

Remember how people used to say computers will mean No More Paperwork?

As a measure of how accurate *that* was, just look at the shredding machines on sale in every high street, and the growing "document destruction" industry.

Households in England throw out more than five million tons of paper waste every year. Much of it was enjoyed for sure, but the rest was fretted over, ignored or put under the cat-box.

Paper has even broadcast our secrets on bin-day, thanks to the banks.

But we really can't blame the dumb computer.

Technology is a force for good - look no further than medical care. This centre, the volunteers and local organisations clearly benefit from our 'VBase' of opportunities, and its capacity to upload to the do-it website.

Well... we are currently putting this setup to a new use.

With our friends at the other eight volunteer centres in Devon we want to document and recognise the enormous contribution volunteers make to life here. The project is called **Count Me In!**

Around now, you'll receive a questionnaire - by email if we can - but otherwise, yes, whoops, on paper!



Howard

## Six ways we support volunteers

South Hams is one of nine volunteer centres across Devon, and the most recent. In short, we act as a kind of 'dating agency' between people who wish to volunteer and organisations who'd like to meet them.

Of course, we do more. Our ground-plan is based on what Volunteering England say are six main tasks:

- ◆ Brokerage (the 'dating')
- ◆ Promoting volunteering
- ◆ Building good practice
- ◆ Developing opportunities
- ◆ Policy work, campaigning
- ◆ Strategic development

That all happens, in varying measure, thanks to the supportive partnership of South Hams District Council and Devon County Council.

Crucially, the centre benefits from being part of South Hams Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), a registered charity that has a great track record over the past decade of helping its large membership of local groups to flourish. The CVS offers one-to-one help, training and tailor-made workshops to groups, and to individuals setting them up. The CVS also consults locally and regionally in the community interest.

**So I rang British Telecom. I said I want to report a nuisance caller. He said "Not you again". - Tommy Cooper**

## The choice is yours

"Volunteering is the best thing I have ever done" says a poster on the wall of the Volunteer Centre. It's a happy comment among many picked up by the do-it organisation. They run the national website [do-it.org.uk](http://do-it.org.uk) through which we advertise most of our South Hams opportunities.

The web is a great way to home in on what suits you. On the other hand, the Volunteer Centre is always more than pleased to meet face-to-face, learn what really interests you and what you'd like volunteering to bring to *you*.

Opportunities develop all the time, but to give you an idea...

**Activist:** Lobby MPs on behalf of other young.

**Angels:** Help put a new travelling theatre on the road.

**Business:** Several groups seek knowhow! Pick your cause.

**Children:** Enable children to play while parents meet in prison.

**Community:** Prepare and serve weekly lunch.

**Empathic:** Advocate and support vulnerable people.

**Movers and shakers:** Be a trustee for a museum...childrens reading charity...preschool group...playcentre...exchange trading system...Bhuddist retreat. Trustees and other seniors are much in demand and don't necessarily have to bring special knowledge: often what's valued is life experience, young or old, and a sense of responsibility.

**Official:** Train as a special constable.

**Outdoors:** Maintain lovely garden...protect barn owls.. lead people in healthy walks, plan a charity run.

**Practical:** Fix household items for re-use. Run a railway.

**Sea:** Restore much loved club-boat that trains young people ...crew a lifeboat or shore activity...save the coast.

**Techie/creative:** Be webmaster with an arts and education-orientated recycling team.

**Young volunteers** are active across the South Hams:

hospital radio, sailing clubs, Samaritans, nature conservation, guiding council planning, NHS healthcare support. If you're at school, please show Volunteer Vision to your teacher!

(Right) The [do-it.org.uk](http://do-it.org.uk) website where you can explore most of the opportunities in South Hams that we have found so far. We update it at least weekly. If no contact is given, ask us at South Hams Volunteer Centre and we'll let you know who to talk with, and give you an introduction if you prefer.



## NEWSlines

**Commission latest** The independent Commission on the Future of Volunteering, mentioned in the previous issue, will reveal its long-term vision for volunteering in England in February. It consulted through 28 public hearings and numerous submissions of evidence, including input from South Hams Volunteer Centre on behalf of our colleagues in Devon. The report looks at volunteering culture, inclusiveness and the government's relationship with volunteering.

**Childcare shock** The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) has concluded that volunteers are not entitled to reimbursement of childcare costs. This is challenged by Volunteering England and we look forward to minister John Hutton's response to our joint CVS/VC protest.

**And finally...** **Trees for Health** have announced their latest programme of tree planting at several beautiful locations in South Hams. This is a special opportunity for volunteers, as you can learn to grow medicinal herbs and pick up a lot of practical knowledge about planting and tree care, not to mention the healthy activity and teamwork. If you'd like the contact person, please give us a call at the Volunteer Centre.

## G.a.z.e.b.o.w.a.t.c.h.!

*Volunteer Vision* invites your printable snapshots of gazebos great and small: yours, or ones you spot. We could yet start a Gazebo-guide and swap ideas on effective promotional effort.

Last issue we kicked off with this eye-catching display by **Devonlane Credit Union**, with thanks to sandwich-board supremo Roger Tyler.



*Have you a local photo? Please let's borrow it!*

Happily we report a doubling in the number of photos made available: below is the next one, seen in Brixham... Yes, Torbay... It sets out to promote a major charity, but on the day could anyone guess which?



Find fantastic volunteering opportunities in the South Hams by visiting us in Totnes, or by looking online at: [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)

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Large print copies of *Volunteer Vision* and the CVS publication *Voluntary Vine* are available on request.

**Disclaimer:** South Hams CVS cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure details are correct, we cannot endorse events or items mentioned in this newsletter.

**South Hams Council for Voluntary Service**, registered charity no. 1049762, is a member of the National Association for Voluntary & Community Action (NAVCA), the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), and Volunteering England.

•YOUR COMMENTS and QUERIES on any topic are welcome•

# South Hams *Volunteer* Centre